

Department of Human Services (DHS) & Affordable Housing Commission (AFC)
FY2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Questions and Answers

- 1. Why is there such a short turnaround for this RFP? Getting something like this together by October 22 is really difficult from an agency perspective. Is there any way to extend the deadline a few more weeks past the 22nd?**
 - a. The City hopes that the timeframe allotted in which the RFP is open is sufficient for respondents to prepare their proposals. The time period was chosen due to the urgent need to implement programs in light of eviction risks and other circumstances. If the City decides to extend the RFP closing date, notice will be provided of such extension as soon as possible to those entities who have notified DHS of their interest in applying and by posting an addendum at:
<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/human-services/homeless-services>.
- 2. Could funds be used to purchase a building for additional shelter beds?**
 - a. Per the ARPA FAQ document, it does not appear that the acquisition of property is prohibited. However, as with all expenditures under ARPA, you have to make the case that the acquisition of property relates somehow to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be a tough case to make, although it may be possible.
- 3. If funded, what is the contract period and when is the deadline for spending all of the funds?**
- 4. How do we acquire a copy of “System for Award Management (SAM) Report”? Is this a “good standing” report?**
 - a. Registration in SAM is required for businesses to do federal contracting and for nonprofits to receive federal grants. Register at: <https://usfcr.com/sam-registration/>. Once registered at sam.gov a report or confirmation of registration can be printed and submitted as an attachment to your proposal.
- 5. How would I acquire an HMIS Participation Letter?**
 - a. If you have never used HMIS, you will not be able to acquire a participation letter but should instead submit a letter from your own organization, stating if awarded that you will comply with the HMIS requirement to join HMIS and use HMIS for data entry.
- 6. Living Wage – Where and how is the application should I reference the “living wage”?**
 - a. There is no place within your proposal where you need to address the Living Wage. Living Wage is addressed in the Terms & Conditions section of the RFP, so that you are aware that this will be a stipulation of any contract the City goes into, where the organization would need to comply with. (refer to Ordinance No. 65597, which is listed below).

- b. In accordance with Ordinance No. 65597, the St. Louis Living Wage Ordinance (“Ordinance”) and the Regulations associated therewith, the City Compliance Official for the City of St. Louis has determined that the following living wage rates are now in effect for employees of covered contracts: 1) Where health benefits as defined in the Ordinance are provided to the employee, the living wage rate is \$13.73 per hour (130% of the federal poverty level income guideline for a family of three); and 2) Where health benefits as defined in the Ordinance are not provided to the employee, the living wage rate is \$18.27 per hour (130% of the federal poverty level income guideline for a family of three, plus fringe benefit rates as defined in the Ordinance). 3) Wages required under Chapter 6.20 of the Revised Code of the City of St. Louis: \$4.54 per hour. These rates are based upon federal poverty level income guidelines as defined in the Ordinance and these rates are effective as of APRIL 1, 2021. These rates will be further adjusted periodically when the federal poverty level income guideline is adjusted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or pursuant to Chapter 6.20 of the Revised Code of the City of St. Louis. The Ordinance applies to employers who are covered by the Ordinance as defined in the Ordinance, where the contract or grant is entered into or renewed after the effective date of the Ordinance, which is November 3, 2002. A copy of the Ordinance may be viewed online at <http://www.flystl.com/bdd> or obtained from: City Compliance Official c/o St. Louis Airport Authority St. Louis, Missouri (314) 426-8111

7. St. Louis City Earnings Taxes – Is this a reference to personal earnings tax paid? If so, at what point is the certification for taxes paid needed?

- a. This certification will be required within the contract phase and will be required before full execution. The assigned Contract Compliance Officer will notify the organization when it is required.

8. Letter of Support from the Alderman/woman – Is this letter of support required? Does the letter have to be from an Alderperson within the City of St. Louis? Any thoughts on the best way to acquire this letter?

- a. Yes, this letter of support is a required attachment.
- b. Yes, the letter needs to be from an Alderperson within the City of St. Louis. It should ideally be from the Alderperson of the ward with which the agency resides. If that is not obtained, agency may seek this letter from any other Alderperson.
- c. The City’s website has a listing of all wards and Alderpersons. When you click the Alderman/woman’s name, it will take you to their contact information.
- d. <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/aldermen/Wards-1-28.cfm>

9. On pages 25-27 of the RFP, there are scope of work / project descriptions for all categories (#3) but Wrap Around Services. Will a description for the Wrap Around Services be provided?

- a. No, there aren’t any specific additional questions to be asked for this Service Category. For a Wrap Around Services project the narrative will need to address just #3: “Provide a comprehensive project description, including the intended impact of the project on unhoused individuals and families or those at risk of becoming unhoused. Explain best practices and

interventions to be utilized in carrying out the scope of your project. For some projects see below for additional required information.”

10. On page 30, #10, applicants are to provide a timeline. Is the expected timeline a 12-month time period?

- a. Yes, all contracts will be for 12 months/1 year. There may be opportunity for contract extensions or renewals.

11. On page 30, #11, are federal indirect cost rate agreements permissible within the budget?

- a. If you have a federal indirect cost rate, which has been approved by a Federal Agency, you may submit your budget using that indirect cost rate, however, ARPA Funds come from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and authorization to use that indirect cost rate for your project will have to come from them, once the request is submitted. That decision will have to be made by the Treasury Department for your specific project. We will need to know with what Federal Agency your indirect cost rate was approved. Though you submit your budget based on that indirect cost rate, the City may have to have you revise the budget if the request is denied by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

12. What is the anticipated start date for these contracts?

- a. The start date is flexible, but the City will want to see start up for many of these projects to be as soon as possible. You may propose a start date in your proposal and the City will work with your agency to assist making that date feasible.

13. Should agencies submit a separate application for each PSH project they would be using funding for, or can all PSH programs be included on a single application, as long as purposed activities are universal?

- a. Either of those options posed are acceptable. The City would prefer just one application, but if it is easier for the Agency, separate proposals may be submitted.

14. Page 12. 9A: Can you please expand on types of activities that would fall under the “retention” portion of this section. The writing seems to honor the work staff had to do through the pandemic, and questions have come up as to whether retention incentives or retention bonuses would be allowed for staff who worked throughout the pandemic?

- a. Per, *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Compliance and Reporting Guidance (SLFRF)*, Premium Pay is allowable: Recipients may provide premium pay retrospectively for work performed at any time since the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Such premium pay must be “in addition to” wages and remuneration already received and the obligation to provide such pay must not have been incurred by the recipient prior to March 3, 2021.
- b. In addition, this information has been received which the City will have to report on for premium pay:
 - Allowed for sectors designated as critical to the health and well-being of residents.

- Number of workers to be served (via premium pay)
- A brief written narrative justification of how the premium pay or grant is responsive to workers performing essential work during the public health emergency. This could include a description of the essential workers' duties, health or financial risks faced due to COVID-19, and why the premium pay was responsive to workers performing essential work during the pandemic. This description should not include personally identifiable information; when addressing individual workers, recipients should be careful not to include this information. Recipients may consider describing the workers' occupations and duties in a general manner as necessary to protect privacy.

15. Will there be a separate funding round for the rental assistance program (currently ERA/STL City ERAP)?

- Yes, ERAP programs are being kept separate from these ARPA funds.

16. For the intentional encampment, it sounded like the city would provide the shelter space or identify spaces where intentional encampments may be placed. Is that the case? We're trying to figure out if we need to include facilities/overhead costs or if that is going to be navigated by the city.

- For the Intentional Encampment, the City is trying to secure the lots/spaces for the site(s). The City is also open to those entities which have their own spaces already in mind for the project. In the proposal it should be indicated if the organization has space already or would like the City's located spaces to be used, and then budget accordingly.

17. Are staff salaries or stipends also paid out via reimbursement the following month?

- Yes.

18. What is allowed for "Premium Pay?"

- Premium Pay may be used for essential public safety, public health, health care, human services and similar employees for their time responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This premium pay is in addition to a worker's regular rate of wages and is not a substitute for normal earnings. Employees who worked remotely from a residence are not eligible for premium pay. This pay may be applied retrospectively for work performed since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- Premium pay means an amount up to \$13 per hour in addition to wages or remuneration the work otherwise receives and in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$25,000 per eligible worker.

19. Can we add a 10% Admin Fee to our project budgets?

- The 10% rule has to do with indirect costs. (We should not use the terms admin costs or program costs in this context because they are not relevant.) A direct cost is a cost directly incurred and chargeable towards the grant, such as time worked for grant purposes, or payments to vendors for grant work. An indirect cost consists of the Agency's or project's overhead—i.e., costs not directly chargeable to the grant, but just general background costs of the department/project. Under the Uniform Guidance, you can multiply 10% by your direct

costs and charge that amount to the grant for indirect costs. So, if you have \$10,000 in direct costs, you can charge \$1,000 in indirect costs as well. There are two caveats apply:

- You should not charge as direct costs to the grant, items that would already be included as part of the indirect costs; and
- You cannot exceed the total amount of the grant award. So, in other words, if a grant is for \$1 million, and you have already charged through \$1 million in direct costs, you can't charge any indirect costs because you have used up all the funding provided.

20. We did not expand shelter capacity due to COVID-19 (we just weren't able to due to space). Can we apply for overhead costs for maintenance and/or our IT contracting services for direct service personnel if we didn't expand due to COVID?

- a. Yes, you absolutely can apply for emergency shelter funds for those operational expenses within your shelter. The goal of the City is to add capacity/beds but isn't opposed to also assisting the City's current emergency shelters.

21. Based on information hears on the zoom call, since we are planning to apply for both a RRH program (as an extension of our current CV grant) and a Bridge program, would it be ok to just put both of those in the same application?

- a. At this time, we believe we will want separate data collected for Bridge and RRH projects, so believe these types of projects should be separate proposals/applications. In addition, referrals to each project type may be coming from different sources.

22. Section 5. COVID Response – Centralized Intake / Call Hotline, on page 7. Is it the intent of this project to screen ALL City residents for services or only those with Prevention related needs (Housing/Utilities)? Is it required that all assessments and referrals be entered into the HMIS system or only those being referred for shelter services? In terms of follow ups, is it expected that every person who goes through the intake process get follow up? Or are you looking for a statistically significant subset?

- a. The intent of this project is to set up a hotline which can answer questions, do a light intake and assessment to determine what of all the services within this RFP may match to the client's situation and then assist with referring them to that resource. These call takers may refer someone for any of these services: provide problem-solving and prevention/diversion conversations, refer Emergency Shelter (reserving beds in Get Help), to Bridge Housing, Mortgage Assistance, to St. Patrick's Center for intake/assessment for Coordinated Entry, for Wrap-Around Services, to ERAP, and perhaps to Community Outreach and any other services needed that the call-taker is aware of.
- b. The selected provider and DHS staff will determine, based upon the scope of work submitted and selected if HMIS will need to be utilized. Due to this being ARPA funds, there may not be a need for this specific project to utilize HMIS, but this project would have to capture information in some form to report to DHS on.

- c. Follow-up could be accomplished via a statistically significant subset of callers, if the call volume is overwhelmingly high. Please propose how the provider would envision doing that sort of follow up in a statistically significant way.

23. We had a pipe burst in our St. Louis City shelter and have retained a company to fix the damage. The repairs are scheduled to take place at the end of October/early November which, based on the information provided at the bidder's conference, will be prior to the beginning of the grant period. Due to this, we had to take 3 bedrooms and 3 offices out of commission. Could we apply for ARPA funding (retroactively) to cover the cost of this project since it is affecting capacity?

- a. To do repairs such as that, you would have to utilize the City's procurement procedures, and seek bids rather than just making a selection of a company. If you'd be willing to go out for bid on the project, it may be eligible, but a contract under ARPA funds will not be likely in the timeframe you anticipate doing the repairs.

24. Is internet service considered a utility?

- a. This is a good question, and I've searched but can't find a definitive answer. If you are writing a proposal you can write it into the budget, and should the proposal be selected for funding, and the City determines it isn't allowable, you will be given the opportunity to update/change the budget which will be a part of the contract.

25. Is a "Case Management Lead" required for ARPA "wrap around services"?

- a. If the proposal for Wrap Around Services isn't including Case Management, no, you wouldn't need to provide a case management lead person contact.

26. I am a grant writer in the STL area and have a client who is considering applying to the ARPA/AHC RFP. They provide different forms of housing and services for people who are homeless or in imminent danger of becoming homeless. They are looking to increase their emergency assistance (utility, rent, transportation, etc.) available to their residents/clients to help prevent future housing instability. We are thinking that it fits within the "wrap around services" but wanted to check if this request is a high enough priority to be considered. The organization does receive some AHC money and is already set up in HMIS and part of CoC so they align in a lot of other ways.

- a. Yes, that type of assistance sounds exactly what Wrap Around Services funding could be used for. Everything you listed are emergent and high needs supports, so a proposal for such will be highly considered.